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INFO RUEHZM/GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHKU/OMC-K KUWAIT KU PRIORITY
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SUBJECT: KUWAIT'S COUNTRY-WIDE RADIATION MONITORING SYSTEM
DESCRIBED BY U.S. BUSINESSMAN

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11. (SBU) Summary: A U.S. businessman told Ambassador on January 8 that the Kuwaiti company he works for had just been awarded a contract by Kuwait's Ministry of Health to install fifteen radiation monitoring systems throughout Kuwait. He said that these systems could be used to monitor for any radiation from nuclear activities throughout the region, "from Israel to Iran." He continued that his company was also hoping to sign a contract to sell the Ministry of Health, and other Gulf country health ministries, IOSAT, a thyroid-blocking medication used in the event of a nuclear emergency. End Summary.

12. (SBU) U.S. businessman and long-time Post contact Emad Al-Zaben, General Manager of Bader Sultan and Brothers Company (BSBC), a leading Kuwaiti importer of high-end medical and scientific equipment from the United States, met with Ambassador on January 8. Al-Zaben said his firm was recently awarded a Ministry of Health contract to install a radiation monitoring system in Kuwait. Using gamma, alpha and beta radiation sensors (manufactured by Meridian, CT-based Canberra Industries), BSBC will install fifteen gamma monitors, alpha/beta radiation probes and related meteorological equipment throughout Kuwait. This installation will provide real-time and historical record taking of potential reactor and other nuclear accidents or events. The first phase will include the erection of the monitoring units at various medical facilities throughout Kuwait and at border sites. In phase two, BSBC hopes to provide one or more mobile units for ambient gamma monitoring. The combined system will connect via GPS, telemetry and a communications unit for centralized data collection.

13. (SBU) Al-Zaben said that the first phase of the system would be operational by June 2006, and would be able to monitor radiation "from Israel to Iran." He noted that, using existing equipment installed previously, the Ministry of Health had detected radiation levels from nuclear tests in Pakistan. Al-Zaben provided a hand-out and CD with additional details. (We will pouch a copy to DoS Kuwait Desk Officer David Berns.) He added that a similar system was being installed in Oman, and that a previous system installed in Saudi Arabia by a German and Czech consortium was "a complete failure."

14. (SBU) Al-Zaben also displayed packets of IOSAT, an

FDA-approved brand of potassium iodide tablet that is used as a thyroid-blocking medication in the event of a radiation emergency. He said that BSBC had obtained the exclusive license to sell IOSAT in the Gulf and that he was close to a deal with the Kuwaiti Ministry of Health to purchase enough IOSAT for the entire population. He said that he was working on similar deals in other Gulf countries.

15. (U) BSBC is a major Kuwait importer of pharmaceuticals, advanced medical/diagnostic devices, and scientific laboratory equipment. The firm represents key U.S. interests including Perkin Elmer, E.I. Du Pont, Boston Scientific, Cooper Surgical, Eli Lilly, Merck and CR Bard. The company is divided into several divisions including medical equipment, pharmaceuticals, laboratory equipment, consumer health products and O&M services.

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LeBaron